

- Inflation rate rises 0.5 percentage points to 2.3% in May
- Motor vehicles number one cause of accidental death among BC children
- Retail sales rise 1.3%; wholesalers post 2.2% decrease in April

## Prices

- **British Columbia's inflation rate jumped to 2.3% in May, following a smaller increase (+1.8%) in the all-items Consumer Price Index (CPI) in April.** Energy costs, which have been fuelling inflation over the past several months, were 11.4% higher than in May of 2005. Energy price increases have fluctuated around the five to 15 percent level during the last year, and have risen by almost 50% since the turn of the century.

Fuel prices helped drive transportation (+6.6%) costs up last month, as vehicle owners paid 19.1% more to fill up their tanks. The cost of vehicle insurance was also higher (+1.7%) than in May of last year. BC residents paid 2.6% more for shelter as fuel oil (+14.9%), water (+9.1%) and piped gas (+4.2%) were on the rise. Home owners also faced higher property taxes (+6.3%) and insurance premiums (+5.3%). However, the costs for household furnishings (-3.1%) and equipment (-3.2%) declined. BC students paid more for tuition (+2.9%) and costs for health & personal care (+1.8%) and food (+1.2%) were also up.

In general, consumers paid more for non-durable goods (+3.7%) and services (+2.6%) than in May of 2005 while prices for durable goods (-1.4%) deflated. Excluding energy, prices rose at a relatively moderate 1.5%.

*Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **BC's inflation rate was the lowest in the country in May.** Alberta (+4.5%) saw the most significant average price increase followed by PEI (+3.3%) and Nova Scotia (+3.2%). Canada's inflation rate was 2.8%, due mostly to a sharp 18.6% increase in the cost of gasoline, which was the main contributing factor in a 14.1% rise in the energy index.

Among metropolitan areas, Vancouver (+2.3%) and Victoria (+2.2%) experienced average inflation rates in May.

*Data Source: Statistics Canada*

## The Economy

- **Wholesale sales in the province slipped 2.2% (seasonally adjusted) in April, the largest decline among the provinces.** Total Canadian sales were virtually unchanged (+0.1%) from the March level, as strength in Eastern Canada was unable to offset weakness in the West. Wholesalers in seven provinces saw growth, ranging from 0.3% in both Quebec and Ontario to 7.1% in New Brunswick, while sales were down in Saskatchewan (-1.1%), Alberta (-0.5%) and BC.

*Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Sales by retailers in the province rose 1.3% (seasonally adjusted) in April, following a 0.8% increase in March.** Retail sales were most robust in Alberta (+3.9%), Newfoundland & Labrador (+3.8%) and Saskatchewan (+3.4%). PEI (-0.7%) and New Brunswick (-0.4%) were the only provinces where sales were off in April. Strong sales in the automotive sector (+3.6%) were a major factor in the overall growth in retail sales at the national level (+1.7%).

*Data Source: Statistics Canada*

## Tourism

- **The number of visitors entering Canada via BC borders inched down (-0.5%, seasonally adjusted) in April after rising in March (+2.8%).** Entries from the US, which comprise most of the visits, edged down (-0.2%) as Americans made fewer same-day (-0.7%), but more overnight (+0.9%) trips into BC. Travel to BC from overseas countries was also off (-1.9%) in April, brought down by a 1.2% decline in the number of Asian entries. Entries from Japan (-6.4%) and Taiwan (-10.1%) posted significant

### Did you know...

Almost two thirds (61%) of parents in Western Canada worry they don't spend enough quality time with their children. *Source: Ipsos-Reid*

decreases from the previous month. However, visits from Europe (+4.8%) and Oceania (+9.2%) continued to grow.

The number of Canadians returning home via BC also edged down (-0.1%). Same-day car trips from the US increased 0.9%. The number of travellers returning home from trips overseas dipped (-0.4%) in March.

*Data Source: Statistics Canada & BC Stats*

### Environmental Indicators

- **BC and Alberta (12.5% each) have the largest proportion of land dedicated to protected areas in Canada, well above the national average (7.3%).** The population of BC's coast is projected to increase by a million people over the next 20 years, putting pressure on an already threatened environment. Population pressure is most concentrated on the southwest coast where 76% of the province's population lives. Whereas 46% of the land along BC's northern and central coast is ecologically intact, the same can be said for only 2.8% of the area along the south coast. In the Greater Vancouver Regional District, more than 40% of the land has been permanently altered by human uses such as housing, transportation, industry and agriculture, while about 40% is covered by forest.

In 2005, 86 coastal species in BC were listed by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada as locally extinct, endangered or threatened. Meanwhile, it is estimated that at least 629 species of alien plants occur on BC's coast and 41 species of non-native vertebrates have been accidentally or intentionally introduced.

Between 1990 and 2002, greenhouse gas emissions in BC rose at an annual average of 2.1%, somewhat slower than the Canadian average (+2.8%).

*Data Source: Ministry of Environment*

### Child Fatalities

- **Of all coroner case fatalities reviewed by the Child Death Review Unit of the BC Coroners Service between January 2003 and January 2006, 52% were caused accidentally.** Other circumstances of death among individuals under the age of 19 included natural (19%), suicidal

(13%) and homicidal (3%). Motor vehicle deaths accounted for 60% of accidental deaths, while 12% were due to drowning.

There were almost twice as many deaths of male children (64%) compared to female children (36%) over the three year period. There was also a disproportionately higher number of fatalities of Aboriginal children.

*Data Source: BC Coroners Service*

### The Nation

- **In 2005, Canada's trade deficit in culture goods (books, CDs, films, paintings, etc.) widened by 8.4%, the largest increase in six years.** Shrinking exports (-1.0% to \$2.4 billion) and a simultaneous increase of imports (+2.7% to over \$4.0 billion) of cultural goods caused the expanded deficit.

The United States continued to be the dominant marketplace, accounting for 90% of Canada's culture goods exports, and 76% of imports.

*Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **The Canadian composite leading indicator advanced 0.3% in May, with expansion in six of the ten components.** Spending in the retail sector boosted the overall index as sales of furniture & appliances (+1.4%) and other durable goods (+1.1%) both posted significant gains. Negative influences on the composite index included a retreat in the housing index (-0.6%), a composite of housing starts and sales.

*Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Canadian investment in foreign securities increased in April for the fourth month this year.** Canadian acquisitions were split almost equally between purchases of foreign stocks (\$2.4 billion) and bonds (\$2.5 billion). Canadian investors shed some money market paper (\$253 million), such that the total net holdings in foreign securities amounted to about \$4.7 billion.

At the same time, foreign investors acquired \$3.9 billion in Canadian securities, up from \$3.2 billion in March. The increase in non-resident investment was due to a record purchase (\$6.3 billion) of outstanding Canadian stock.

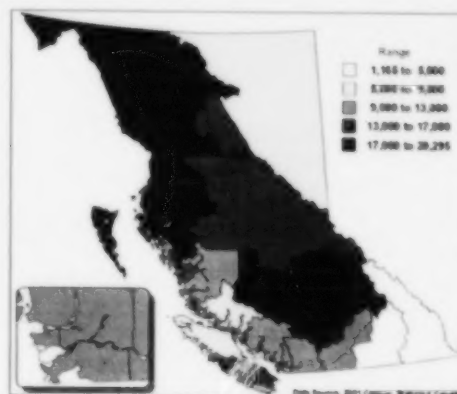
*Data Source: Statistics Canada*

*Infoline Issue: 06-25  
June 23, 2006*

## Demographic Characteristics of British Columbia's Senior Population: an Environmental Scan, Part 3

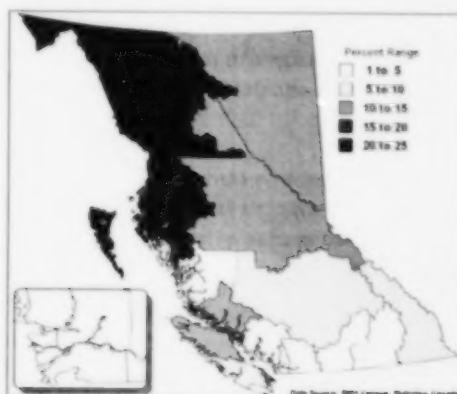
### First Nations population show regional concentrations

From the 2001 Census question of Aboriginal Identity, it can be seen that the First Nation population is numerically concentrated in the south-central and north-west regions of the province.



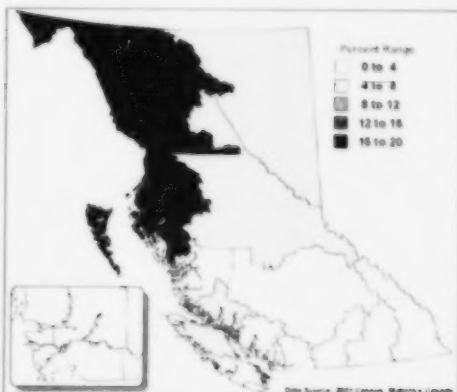
### The highest proportion of regional population that is First Nations is in the north

The proportion of the total resident regional population that indicated that they were of Aboriginal Identity varies across the province, with the highest proportions in northern BC and upper Vancouver Island.



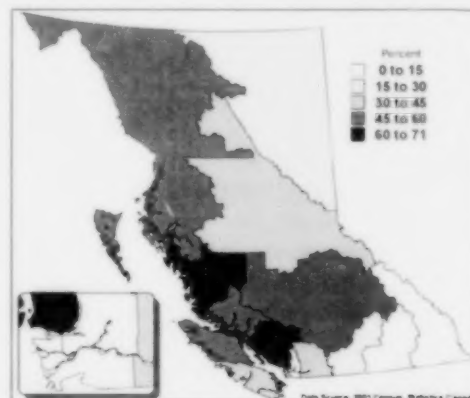
### First Nation seniors make up higher proportions of their population group in the north

The regions with higher proportions of First Nation populations are also areas where the percentage of the First Nations population that is 65+ is highest.



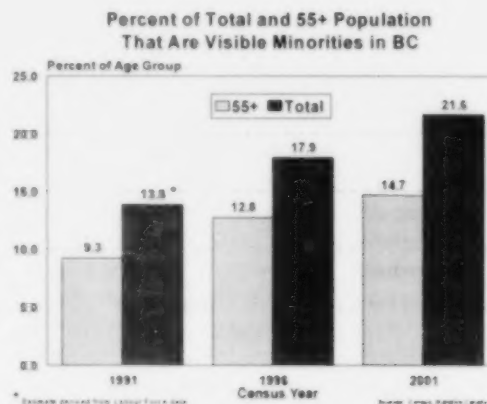
## Higher proportions of First Nations seniors tend to live on-reserve in the coastal areas

Province-wide, about 27 percent of First Nations population reported living on-reserve in the 2001 Census (from the 'Aboriginal Identity' question), while 37 percent of First Nations seniors did so. There was considerable regional variation in this measure, with a very high percentage reported (71%) in the same region with the highest proportion of First Nations' population on reserve (60%).



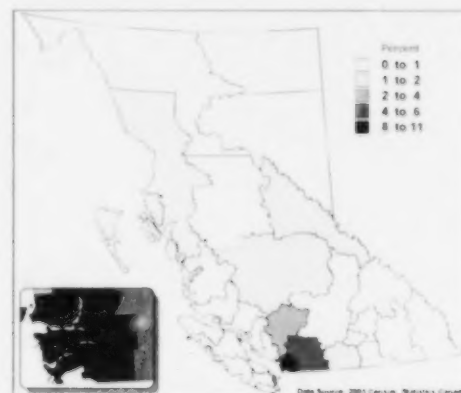
## The number of visible minorities is increasing in the senior's age group

As the main sources of immigrants to British Columbia have changed from European to Asian countries, the ethnic and visible minority makeup of the province has changed. In 2001, a large proportion of the province had very low proportions of visible minorities 55+, except for the concentration in the lower mainland.



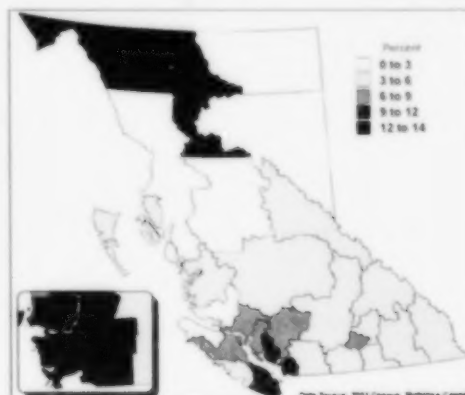
## The proportion of the 55+ population who currently speak neither English nor French is highest in the lower mainland

In 2001, 5.7% of the population aged 55+ could not conduct a conversation in English or French. The highest proportion of this group was in the Greater Vancouver Regional District (with 10.9%).



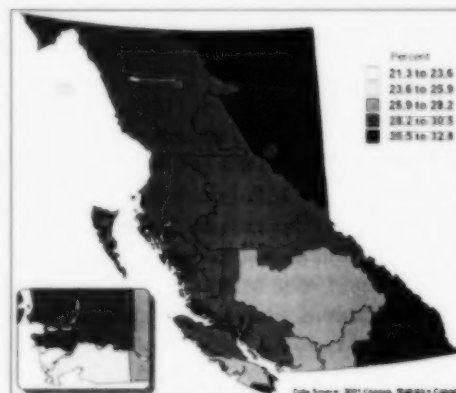
## Higher proportions of seniors with University Degrees are concentrated in the south-west

From the 2001 Census, seniors who have received a bachelors or higher degree are concentrated in the south-west region of the province. Given the small number of seniors in the north-west, the high proportion shown there may be due to the 'random-rounding' of the census data for this variable.



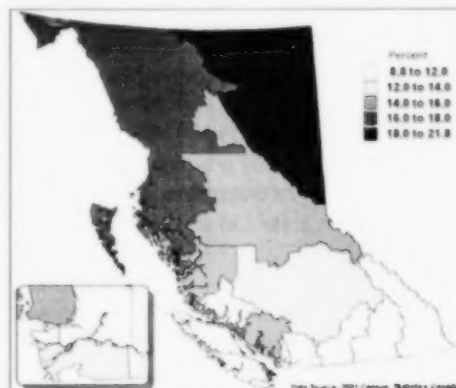
## Almost a third of seniors residing in the eastern part of the province live alone.

The proportion of seniors living alone varies across the province. In 2001, 28.4% of seniors lived alone. Of those seniors living alone, 71.9% were women and 28.1% were men. The highest proportion of women 65+ living alone are in south Vancouver Island and the south eastern corner of the province. These women in particular may experience financial challenges, as women in general tend to have lower average incomes.



## Northern BC shows higher proportions of employed seniors

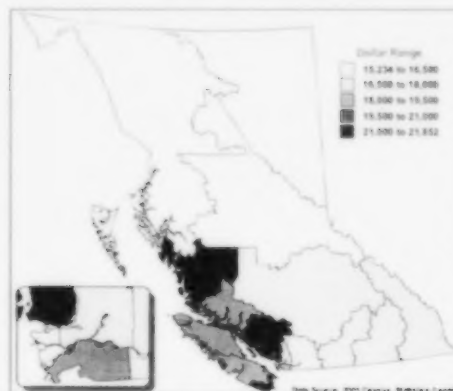
The percentage of the population (non-institutionalized) aged 65 and over that worked (full- or part-time) in the year 2000 is not insignificant, but is concentrated in the younger age groups of seniors. For BC, rates of working go from 23% of 65-69's, 10% for 70-74's to 5% for 75-79's. Thus the 65+ rate is highly dependent on the number of 65-69 year olds by region. These areas also have higher rates of income from self-employment than other regions.





## Median Income of seniors is highest in the south-west

The median income (half the persons have income above and half below the ranged amount) from all income sources in 2000 shows higher incomes in the southern half of the province, with the highest incomes in the south-west. For seniors the overall BC median income from major sources was \$17,580 (\$22,744 for males, 15,240 for females) in 2000.



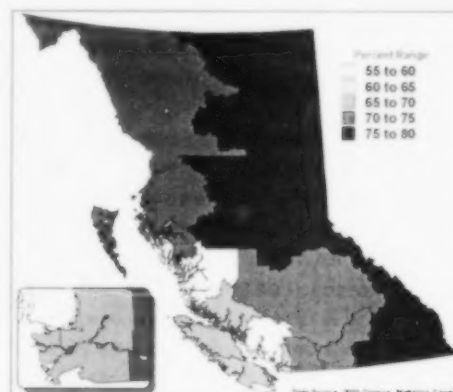
## Male and female median incomes show differences overall, but also a wide range of regional variation

From 2001 Census information on income, the northern parts of the province show a much lower average income, and greater similarity in median income levels between males and females, than on Vancouver Island.

	Median Income	Male Median Income	Female Median Income	Male/Female Income Ratio
South Vancouver Island	21,852	29,956	17,510	1.71
North Shore/Coast Garibaldi	21,639	26,740	17,443	1.65
Central Vancouver Island	18,536	25,004	14,928	1.67
North Vancouver Island	18,035	24,642	15,191	1.62
Fraser South	18,029	23,903	15,293	1.56
British Columbia	17,580	22,744	15,240	1.49
Fraser North	17,247	21,956	15,190	1.45
Okanagan	17,035	21,039	14,902	1.41
Thompson Cariboo	16,943	21,073	14,352	1.47
Kootenay Boundary	16,910	21,069	14,421	1.46
Fraser East	16,812	21,749	14,339	1.52
East Kootenay	16,611	20,746	14,266	1.45
Richmond	16,497	20,528	14,593	1.41
Vancouver	16,268	18,749	14,788	1.27
Northwest	16,121	19,599	13,963	1.40
Northern Interior	16,046	19,264	14,043	1.37
Northeast	15,234	18,255	13,474	1.35

## Seniors in eastern regions of BC receive higher proportions of their total income from government transfers

Of the major sources of income reported in the 2001 Census (wages and salaries, self-employment, investment income, government transfers), government transfers (which includes CPP) accounted for 67.8% of seniors' income overall in BC. This share is higher in the eastern parts of the province. The 'Other Income Sources' (e.g. annuities, civil service pensions, alimony, etc) represented the second largest source at 18.3%; 'Wages & Salaries' represented 4.5% for BC senior residents.





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## BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)		
	Jan 1/06	% change on one year ago
BC	4,279.5	1.3
Canada	32,422.9	1.0
GDP and INCOME		
(BC - at market prices)	2005	% change on one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (\$ millions)	168,011	6.8
GDP (\$ 1997 millions)	144,028	3.5
GDP (\$ 1997 per Capita)	33,853	2.2
Personal Disposable Income (\$ 1997 per Capita)	20,693	2.5
TRADE (\$ millions, seasonally adjusted)		
		% change on prev. month
Manufacturing Shipments - Apr	3,721	-2.6
Merchandise Exports - Apr	2,774	-5.8
Retail Sales - Apr	4,414	1.3
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		
(all items - May 2006)	% change on one year ago	12-month avg % change
BC	2.3	1.9
Vancouver	2.3	1.7
Victoria	2.2	2.1
Canada	2.8	2.4
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		
(seasonally adjusted)	May '06	% change on prev. month
Labour Force - BC	2,302	0.3
Employed - BC	2,194	0.0
Unemployed - BC	108	5.3
		Apr '06
Unemployment Rate - BC (percent)	4.7	4.5
Unemployment Rate - Canada (percent)	6.1	6.4
INTEREST RATES (percent)		
	Jun 21/06	June 22/05
Prime Business Rate	6.00	4.25
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	6.50	4.75
- 5 year	6.75	5.70
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE		
	Jun 21/06	June 22/05
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn \$	1.1042	1.2355
US \$ (reciprocal of the closing rate)	0.9016	0.8101
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	May '06	% change on one year ago
BC	721.82	3.2
Canada	725.85	4.2
SOURCES:		
Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Statistics Canada Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see <a href="http://www.bankofcanada.ca">www.bankofcanada.ca</a>		

## Regional employment projections

BC Stats, with the financial assistance of the Ministry of Advanced Education, developed the Regional Employment Projection Model (REPM), designed to project industrial and occupational employment in regions of the Province of British Columbia.

[www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/iss/repm.asp](http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/iss/repm.asp)

## Socio-Economic Profiles & Indices 2005

Updated annually, this body of work provides a coherent and relatively comprehensive measurement of social stressors at sub-provincial areas. Charts, tables and, within the indices, consolidated rankings, make the information broadly accessible.

[www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/sep/index.asp](http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/sep/index.asp)

**Note:** Change in format for the presentation of the Consumer Price Index (directly to the left).

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- Consumer Price Index, May 2006

## Next week

- Business Indicators, June 2006
- Current Statistics, June 2006

